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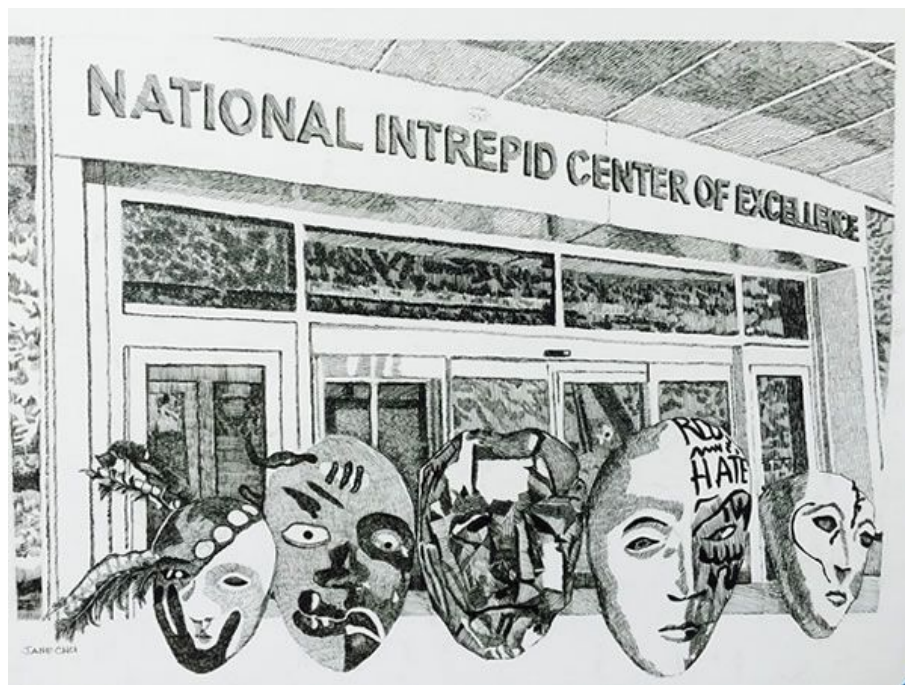
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Historic Healing Arts and Military Partnership Expands

Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network Launches New Sites and Programs



Chairman Jane Chu's sketch of the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) featuring masks created by service members who participated in the creative arts therapy program.

October 25, 2016

Bethesda, MD (October 25, 2016)—American service members dedicate their lives and make incredible sacrifices to preserve our safety and freedom. Supporting a successful transition back into society, especially for those who have been injured as a result of their service, has been the focus of a partnership between the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Department of Defense (DoD).

Today, at an event held at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE), part of Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, the NEA and DoD announced the expansion of the partnership into **Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network**. The expanded Creative Forces program places creative arts therapies at the core of patient-centered care at ten additional clinical sites, and increases access to therapeutic arts activities in local communities for military members, veterans, and their families. The program is also investing in research on the impacts and benefits of these innovative treatment methods.

Since 2011, this military healing arts partnership has supported creative arts therapies for service members with traumatic brain injury and associated psychological health issues at two military medical facilities in the Washington, DC, area—the NICoE at Walter Reed Bethesda in Maryland, and the NICoE Intrepid Spirit-1 at Fort Belvoir in Virginia. The President and Congress recognized the success of the program at these facilities, and believed it could do more. In fiscal year 2016, Congress appropriated a \$1.928 million budget increase for the NEA, specifically allocated to expand this military healing arts program.

"At the National Endowment for the Arts, we understand the healing power of the arts, and are honored to work with the Department of Defense on this transformative program," said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. "Patients who participate in creative arts therapy acknowledge improvement in sleep, memory, pain, cognitive function, and their ability to confront emotional challenges. It is a privilege to be part of a program that benefits the brave men and women who so proudly serve our country, as well as the caregivers and families who support them."

"Placing creative arts therapies at the center of an integrated multidisciplinary team confronting the 'invisible wounds' brought on by traumatic brain injuries and associated psychological health conditions has actually helped provide visibility to some of these injuries, resulting in improved communication and accelerated healing incorporating the entire treatment team," said U.S. Navy Capt. Walt Greenhalgh, director for the NICoE. "We are delighted to be working with the National Endowment for the Arts to help bring these benefits to bear for more military populations across the nationally expanding Creative Forces network."

Creative Forces: Expansion of Clinical Sites

Creative Forces extends creative arts therapies to ten additional locations by 2017. The NEA is providing funding for creative arts therapists, including, but not limited to, art and music therapists, creative writing instructors, as well as program support at these locations.

As of this announcement, five new clinical sites (in addition to Walter Reed and Fort Belvoir) will join Creative Forces:

- Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) – Anchorage, Alaska
- Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton – Oceanside, California
- Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune – Jacksonville, North Carolina
- Fort Hood – Texas
- Madigan Army Medical Center – Tacoma, Washington

Creative Forces: Community Programs

The NEA is working closely with its network of state, local, and regional arts agencies and nonprofit partners in each state or region where clinical sites are located to develop community-based arts programs that allow patients to continue exploring art practices as part of their healing process. In addition to military service members, these programs will be available for veterans, families, and caregivers to access arts programming.

Creative Forces: Capacity-building and Research

The NEA is creating an online toolkit and resources to help communities understand how to support service members, veterans, and their families through arts programming. This includes guidance on how to build deeper connections across civilian and military populations.

The NEA is also investing in research on the impacts – biological, psycho-social, behavioral, and economic – of these arts-based interventions. This includes a partnership with the Creative Arts Therapies PhD program at Drexel University in Philadelphia. Together, the NEA, Drexel, and the NICoE are supporting research on themes communicated through mask making from active duty service members with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. As part of this project, a case study examining long term art therapy with a senior military service member with PTSD and TBI is available [here](#).

Americans for the Arts is working with the NEA to provide administrative support for Creative Forces.

About the National Endowment for the Arts

Established by Congress in 1965, the NEA is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the National Endowment for the Arts and the agency is celebrating this milestone with events and activities through 2016. Go to arts.gov/50th to enjoy art stories from around the nation, peruse Facts & Figures, and check out the anniversary timeline.

About Americans for the Arts

Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education, dedicated to representing and serving local communities and to creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts. With offices in Washington, DC, and New York City, it has a record of more than 55 years of service. Since 2011, Americans for the Arts has led the National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military (NIAHM), a collaborative effort that seeks to advance the policy, practice, and quality use of the arts and creativity as tools for health in the military; raise visibility, understanding, and support of arts and health in the military; and make the arts as tools for health available to active duty military, military families, and veterans. NIAHM's partners include the American Legion Auxiliary, U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs, U.S. Veterans Health Administration, and NIH's National Center of Complementary & Integrative Health alongside arts, humanities, and veterans service nonprofits; state and local cultural agencies; and universities around the country. Additional information is available at www.artsacrossthemilitary.org.

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[From Combat to Community](#): An Art Works blog post by Nolen Bivens, former U.S. Army General and military and community engagement advisor for Creative Forces

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